TEACHER'S QUESTIONING STRATEGIES IN EFL CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to identify and investigate questioning strategies used by teachers in EFL classroom interaction The data were collected by qualitative research in 2015 from a university teacher of STKIP YPUP Makassar by using classroom observation and interview the teachers and students. To analyze the data, the researcher used three key stages by Miles and Huberman (1994) namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The findings show that the teacher applied questioning-planning strategies, question-controlling strategies, and nomination strategies. There was a new questioning strategy that was found, named endless-questioning strategy. The teacher applied his questioning strategies by asking questions to an individual student, pair students, and the whole class. The teacher mostly applied it to an individual student and the whole class rather than to pair students.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most common techniques used in English language teaching is asking question. According to Wood & Carol (2001) define that stimulating students' interaction, thinking, and learning through questions are effective way. Furthermore, in order to ensure that students have perceived what they have been taught, enhance students' involvement, trigger students' creative thinking in classroom interaction are the aim of asking questions (Ma, 2008). However, questions are also used to motivate students, revise, control, test or assess, explore, explain, encourage students to focus on a particular topic, elicit information, and check understanding and control behavior (Young 1992; Richards and Lockhart 1994).

Teacher should be eligible and knowledgeable about types and strategies of questions used in their classroom teaching. Supporting this point of view, teachers who are aware of questioning skills can motivate their students to ask questions and to provide responses. Research indicates that almost 40% of classroom spends in question-response mode (Johnson, Markle, & Haley-Oliphant, 1987).

However, Gall (1984) said that some teachers did not ask questions effectively. Based on my prior interview to some EFL teachers in Makassar, I found that most students are not actively participated in classroom interaction, they do not sometimes give any responses on the questions asked, and they tend to feel ashamed to ask or answer the questions given. Supporting this view, Husnaini (2005) found that the percentage of teacher talk is more that 60%. It shows that teachers mostly dominate the interaction in the classroom. Teachers' domination of classroom interaction can discourage the students to participate the students to participate and speak more in the target language.

In accordance with the above view a common problem that EFL teachers are dealing with a passive class where students are unresponsive and avoiding interaction with the teacher (Ma, 2008). It happens when a teacher triggers interaction in a teacher-class dialog, such as asking questions to the class as a whole, expecting at least one student to respond. it causes a frustrating experience for the two sides. in fact, there will be a condition where there is no response from student. However, even if they understand the questions, know the answers, and are able to produce the answers, they are often reluctant to make response

Hence, this research will investigate the teacher's questioning strategies and their application in the real EFL classroom interaction.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Literature Review

1. Teacher Talk

Richards *et al.* (1992) stated that teacher talk was variety of language used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching. On the other hand, Nunan (1986) composed that teachers often modify their utterances to simplify their words/phrases so that language learners get easier to grab the lesson and assist them acquire the target language It indicates that teacher talk is applied to give learners a comprehensible input. Consequently, the conclusion stated that teacher talk is the language used by teachers in the learning-teaching process to communicate to their students and to make comprehensible input for the learners. Teachers often simplify

their pronunciation, lexical items, and the speed of their speech to their students. It is expected that doing this would be useful for both teachers and students.

2. Teacher's Questioning

Cotton (2001) defines teachers' questions as instructional cues or stimuli that convey to students the content elements learned and directions on what they do and how they do it. Seime (2002) defines classroom question as any statement intended to evoke a verbal response. Moreover, some researchers (Brualdi, 1998; Thompson, 1997; Morgan and Saxton, 1991 and Ur,1996) believe that teacher's questions as the instructional stimuli can give positive effect on students' learning and increase their meaningful participation in classroom interaction. Teachers use question as an instrument to create interaction in the classroom. It is the best way to encourage some responses from student and also to check students understanding about material which has been studied.

3. The Purposes of Teacher's Questions

1) Ross (1860) proposed two main aims of teacher's questions. They are (1) to ascertain whether students remember and understand what has been taught and (2) to have students apply what they have learned. Willen (1991) points that although the two main purposes of teacher's questions are to determine students understanding of basic facts associated with specific content and to have students apply facts using critical thinking skills. Stimulate student participation, conducting a review of materials previously read or studied, stimulating discussion of a topic, issue, or problem, involving students in creative thinking, diagnosing student abilities, assessing student progress, determining the extent to which objectives have been achieved, arousing student interest, controlling student behavior, personalizing subject matter, and supporting student contributions in class are some other purposes suggested by some scholars (Carin & Sund, 1971; Groisser, 1964; and Hyman, 1980) have suggested other related purposes as the following:

4. Effective Questioning

1) Authenticity, it indicates that the question is natural

   2) Meaningfulness, it means that the question is understandable and also interesting

   3) Personalization, it shows that students can regard the question as relevant to themselves.

Those three are stated by Tanaka as cited in Nishimura (2012) However, eliciting a desired response from students, Ur (1996) believes that effective questioning should have clarity. learning value. interest, availability., and extension.

5. Questioning Strategies

Hyman (1979) stated that a strategy is a carefully prepared plan involving a sequence of steps designed to achieve a given goal. on the other hand, Ellis as cited by Xuerong (2012) said that questions typically serve as devices for initiating discourse centered on medium-orientated goals. Efficient questioning can stimulate students to participate in classroom activities (Ur, 1996). Teacher's questioning strategies are categorized into two groups; they are question-planning strategy and controlling strategy.

6. Types of Teacher's Questions

Bloom and his colleagues have proposed six types of questions which are included in Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. Each level of question needs to be answered in different level of thought by learners.

7. Classroom Interaction

Tsui, (2001) gives a definition of classroom interaction as the interaction between the teacher and learners in forms of either teacher-learner interaction or learner-learner interaction It has been found that frequent interactions between teacher and learners are significantly related to students' achievement and can even promote their achievement (Rosenshine, 1971). Ur (1996) introduces *Individual work*, *Group work*, *Collaboration*, and *Full-class interaction* as the various interactions that occur in classroom participation patterns. The teacher influences the learners and vice versa. It is shown in the following figure:

Teacher   →   Students
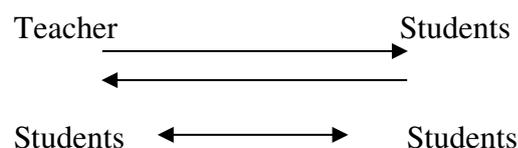
←

Students ← → Students

Figure 2.1: Classroom interaction

There are various ways in recognizing the classroom interaction. Karter in Hamzah (2015: 23-24) states the theories of kinds of interaction are:

a) ***Student-teacher interaction***

b) Students-students interaction

c) ***Small-group interaction***

d) ***Entire Classroom Interaction***

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed qualitative design. Two English techers as the participants of this research were chosen by using purposive sampling. The researcher employed observation with the field notes, interview, and documentation with the recording instrument. The data were collected in some steps namely observation, examining records and data, and interview.

Findings

In this findings, the data were presented in two parts, namely the sorts of teacher's questioning strategies employed in classroom interaction and how the teacher applied his questioning strategies in the classroom interaction.

1. The Sorts of Teacher's Questioning Strategies Employed in Classroom Interaction

Due to the data obtained, it was found that the lecturer who was observed used questions as his teaching techniques in his classroom. He employed some strategies in asking questions in the class.

Question-planning strategy

Purpose : To get the students into the class

    T   : Good morning everyone
    S   : Good morning, sir. (All students shouting)
    T   : **How are you today?**
    S   : fi:::ne sir. How about you?

One type of teacher's questioning strategy used by teacher in classroom interaction was *Question-planning strategy*. Considering the questions that the teacher posed to ask questions relevant to students, we can conclude that the teacher employed **question-planning strategy** based on Ellis as cited Xeurong (2012). The teacher asked questions that were relevant to students. It means

that the questions which were asked related with the students' personal experiences or personal life activities so that each of them was able to give response.

Question-*controlling strategy*

Purpose : To check whether the students remember the previous lesson

    T : Good then. ***Last week kita belajar apa?*** (Point a student who sat in the 2nd row. 'What did we study last week?'

    S : Geru::nd sir.

In teaching the English language, the teacher also used question-controlling strategy to phrase the question then call on specific student to answer. When the teacher posed the question" last week kita belajar apa? ", he let anyone give response on his question. When there was a student who offered to answer the question, the teacher then asked "what do you know about gerund?", here the teacher pointed a student to respond the question, after the student who was assigned had answered the question, the teacher asked another two students without mentioning the question anymore. The teacher said "kalau kamu? and how about you? ". The teacher believed that even though he did not mention the questions, those both students could get what the teacher meant. Therefore, in this case the teacher employed **question controlling strategy** in which the teacher phrased the question then called on the student to respond and the teacher called on specific student to answer.

Nomination strategy

Purpose :

    T : **How are you today?**

    S : fi:::ne sir. How about you?

    T : I am outstanding, extraordinary, and awesome. Beda sama kalian fine saja

    S : (laughing)

    T : **Anyway, How was your weekend?**

    S : so far so good sir

    T : **what did you do? (Point a student)**

    S : I stayed at home ji sir

The other observed teacher's questioning strategy in classroom interaction was nomination strategy. Teacher asked the question, then named or identified

student to answer. The situation above, the teacher also employed **question-controlling strategy** in which the teacher asked questions to the entire of the class and encouraged students to participate. It can be seen when the teacher asked "how are you? and how was your weekend?". Meanwhile, when the teacher asked "what did you do?" the teacher mentioned the question at the first then identified the student to respond. According to Doff (1998), it is called as a **nomination strategy.**

Endless-questioning strategy

Purpose : To provoke students' thinking and elicit ideas from students

> T : okay…hmmm, you (point a student) ***what do you know about woman emancipation?***
> S1 : err.. persamaan hak untuk perempuan sir
>   ['woman's right sir']
> T ***: hak apa?***
>   ['What is that?']
> S2 : maybe hak untuk berkarir sir
> T : ***why do you think perempuan meminta persamaan hak untuk berkarir?***
>   ['why do you think women ask for their right to work?']
> S3 : hmmm mungkin karena mereka pikir kalo laki laki bisa, perempuan juga bias.

In classroom interaction, the teacher also could came up with questions based on the students' answer or response. The teacher kept asking different questions that created based on the student's respond. Here, the teacher controlled when he had to stop asking. The questioning strategy that applied was not either question-planning or question-controlling strategy. The teacher used his own strategy in asking questions to his students. The teacher asked questions continually, he did not stop to one student to ask questions but he continued his questions based on the students' respond. The students did not know what question the teacher would ask them. Therefore, this questioning strategy named as an ***endless-questioning strategy.***

2. The Application of Teacher's Questioning Strategies in Classroom Interaction

To find out how the teacher applies the questioning strategies in the classroom, the researcher has done the direct observation to the classroom, recording the teaching and learning process, taking field notes, and interviewing the teacher.

a. The Questioning Strategies Applied to an Individual Student

During the teaching and learning process that the researcher observed for three times, the teacher frequently assigned the student to response the question individually. In this case, the teacher applied his question-controlling strategy and nomination strategy in the form of interaction between teacher and an individual student. The reason why the teacher mostly asked the question to an individual student is to attract student's attention. When the teacher asked the student individually, another student will pay more attention and always get ready to be asked. It is in line with the teacher's comment which describes as follows:

> *"Not really on purpose. Saya point one student biar yang lain langsung stay tune. Artinya yang lain juga siap, jangan-jangan ditanya ataukah disuruh mengulang jawabannya temannya. (obtained April15, 2015)"*

'Not really on purpose. When I pointed one student to answer the question, others students can get ready and stay tune. Just in case they get the turn to be asked or they are asked to repeat the answer, and so on'

On the other hands, this can be seen on the descriptive notes that were taken by the researcher. It can be described as follows;

> *"He mentions the question first, and then he points a student to answer. The student who is asked gives a response. After the student answers it, he points another student but he doesn't mention/ say the question again. After answering the question, there is a student who gives a response. After these two students give respond, he asks another student to tell what he does at the weekend. When he listens the student's response, he gives a comment on the answer. The student gives positive response on his comment. After that, he tries to point another student to give response. The student who is pointed*

makes sure that the lecturer gives the opportunity to him (noted April 15, 2015)"

b. The Questioning Strategies Applied to Pair of Students

In teaching and learning process, the teacher also applied his questioning strategies to pair of students, but this was not as often as asking the student individually. The teacher addressed his questions to pair of students when there was an activity which was done in pair. The teacher asked the questions in order to make the instruction clear for the pair activities, to give them chance to answer the questions in pair. The teacher set the students in pair, asked them find out their partner. The interaction happened between students in pair to the teacher sometimes when the teacher asked the students to practice the subject or the target language and when the teacher did the review. It can be seen on the following description on the field notes taken;

"Next, the lecturer assigns the students to look for a partner who has things in common. When the have found someone who has a thing or some things in common, they become pair. When every student has gotten a partner, the lecturer gives a worksheet to each pair. Each pair is doing the worksheet. After finishing the worksheet, the lecturer picks up some pairs to tell the answers. The lecturer does some correction if there is a wrong answer. He involves the students to correct the sentences (noted May 6, 2015).

c. The Questioning Strategies Applied to The Whole Class

During the teaching and learning process, the teacher applied his questioning strategies to the whole class very often. The interaction between the teacher and the whole class appeared very often. The teacher always encouraged his students to participate more in the classroom. Some of the questions posed by the teacher were asked to the whole class. The teacher phrased the questions and asked for the chorus responses.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings which have been analyzed, the teacher who was observed mainly employed question as one of his teaching strategy in the classroom interaction.

The questioning strategies that mostly employed by the teacher in the classroom were Question-Planning Strategies, Question-Controlling Strategies which was proposed by Ellis (2012), and also nomination strategies proposed by Doff (1998). Those strategies almost appeared in each extract. Even though, there strategies that were categorized as QPS, QCS, and nomination strategies. Among these tree kinds of questioning strategies, there are some strategies which overlapping. It means that there are some points that they are some parts actually they are the same. It is only a matter of naming the strategy. For instance, in question-controlling strategies there are some points which are the same with nomination strategies, so are the nomination strategies.

Related to the purposes of teacher's question in the classroom, the researcher found different terms by some scholars (Carin & Sund, 1971: Groisser, 1964: Hyman, 1980), there are some terms have the same like what some scholars have stated. Meanwhile, the researcher found the purpose of the teacher asked question in the class is ***to lead the grammar presentation***. The teacher always said this purpose when he asked questions before he explained the lesson.

On the other hand, based on the researcher observation, there was one good habit that the teacher always did in the class. The teacher always asked continuing questions. When the teacher asked a question to a student, then he created another question based on the answer before, then he asked another different student a question that he created based on the answer of the previous student, and so on. What the teacher did could not be found either in question-planning strategy or question-controlling strategy or even in nomination strategy. Due to the fact that the researcher found in the classroom observation during the teaching and learning process, the researcher named the strategy as ***endless-questioning strategy.***

Applying the questioning strategies in the classroom interaction, the observed teacher mostly asked the questions to individual student and the whole class rather than ask pair students. The teacher preferred asking his question individual student randomly in order to attract students' attention and participation.

When the teacher asked an individual student to answer the question, the teacher sometimes mentioned the question first and then pointed the student to respond or gave the opportunities to any students in the class to respond the question. By doing this, each of his students is always ready to be asked or to give response on the teacher's question response. Hence, the students participated actively.

Differently, when the teacher asked the whole class, he always phrased the questions then he encouraged all students to participate. The teacher sometimes asked the questions to the entire of the class and asked for the chorus. The teacher also applied his questioning strategies when he started the class, before he ran the lesson presentation, after the lesson presentation, after giving the instruction, when he does the assessment, and before he ended his class to make sure the students got the lesson taught.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and the discussion in the previous section, (1) the teacher employed the questioning strategies, they were question-planning strategies, question-controlling strategies, and the nomination strategies. There were overlapping between the question-controlling strategies and the nomination strategies because there were some strategies actually the same, they were different in a matter of terms. During the teaching and learning process, there was a new strategy that the researcher formulated based on the observed teacher ways of questioning in the classroom. The new strategy named ***endless-questioning strategy.*** This strategy was like chain questions that the teacher asks to an individual student and creates the next question based on the answer from the previous student and the teacher will not stop asking question if the students are able to answer. (2) The observed teacher applied his questioning strategies to an individual student, to pair students, and to the whole class. Based on the findings, the observed teacher mostly applied his questioning strategies to an individual student and to the whole class rather than the pair students.

Based on the conclusions that have been put above, the following implication and a recommendation for further related research are really suggested by the researcher. The teacher should apply the questioning strategies and use various of question types to stimulate students' participation. In order to fill the

needs of teacher, more research subject about this topic need to be involved in the future study, so we can come to the general conclusion that teachers' questioning strategies can be used as a teaching strategy to participation.

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